

## Letter from W. J. McGee to Alexander Graham Bell, May 21, 1903

1331 CONNECTICUT AVENUE. WASHINGTON, D. C. May 21, 1903. Dr. A. Graham Bell, 1331 Connecticut Avenue. My Dear Dr. Bell:

Let me suggest what seems to me the extreme desirability of omitting the term aeroplane from your specifications and claims, substituting therefor, either the term wing or wings, or else devising an entirely new term to convey your meaning. The object is to prevent the examiner and all other persons from associating your essentially novel ideas, with those involved in the aeroplane proper of which the fundamental idea is that it is orthogonal to gravity. In your device, the surfaces in contact with the air are oblique to gravity and the effect of their passage through the air is to confer steadiness of movement on the vehicle of which they form a part. Possibly your examiners and others may not realize this distinction unless it is stated clearly and emphatically; certainly if it is not stated, the natural tendency of mental action would be to associate the two principles and thus detract from the essential novelty of yours.

Let me suggest further that in lieu of the term rod, which implies or connotes flexibility, you use throughout the term bar, or brace, both of which imply or conote rigidity. Accordingly either term would better fit a structural element designed to give rigidity such as a tube or pipe, circular and cross-section, or as a V bar or H bar or T bar, or as a triangular hollow piece or 2 element — which I venture to specify particularly as the form most congruous with the tetrahedral structure and best adapted to resist the strains to which your structures will be subjected.

Yours sincerely,